

Vol. 10. No. 1

September, 1946

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Canadian POETRY MAGAZINE



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Canadian
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MAGAZINE

VOLUME 10

No. 1 — September, 1946

An official publication of
THE CANADIAN AUTHORS' ASSOCIATION

Canadian Poetry Magazine

A quarterly magazine, issued under the auspices of The Canadian Authors' Association, for the encouragement and development of Canadian verse.

Annual Subscription, two dollars; single copy, fifty cents.

A stamped, self-addressed envelope should be enclosed, if return of manuscript is desired.

Individual criticism of submitted verse cannot be undertaken by the magazine.

**Address correspondence to Canadian Poetry Magazine,
Post Office Box No. 12, Station H, Toronto 13, Ontario.**

FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

The Canadian Authors' Association established the Canadian Poetry Magazine to stimulate the production of fine verse in Canada. The publication of the preceding eight volumes was largely made possible through the generosity of Foundation Supporters, whose gifts supplemented the Magazine's receipts from subscriptions and advertisements.

SUPPORTERS FOR VOLUME 9

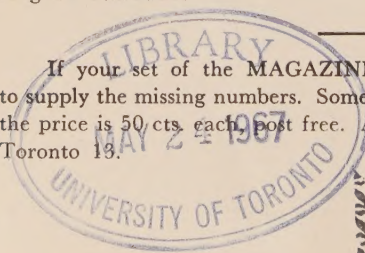
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PAYMENT FOR POEMS

All poems published will be paid for at the uniform rate of fifteen cents a line.

The Editors do not wish to consider for publication any verse that has already been printed elsewhere.

PRIZES FOR POEMS IN THE JUNE NUMBER

First Prize for *Pamela*, by Norma E. Smith.

Second Prize for *Desecration*, by Llyn Morris.

Third Prize for *This Peace*, by Ella H. Eckel.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Leviathan, by Margaret R. Gould.

Morning Watch, by George Whalley.

The Light Faded, by Ethel Errol Boyd.

LIBRARIES SHOULD BE SUBSCRIBERS

Any reader who is a member of a poetry group, or of any society interested in the development of Canadian Literature, would be doing a favour, both to that group and to the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*, by taking this copy to its next meeting, and showing it to the members. Perhaps the reader would also suggest to the Librarian of the local library that the library should become a subscriber. It is in these ways that the people who would be interested in this publication will become aware of its existence.

Time and again a new subscriber will write "I have needed this Magazine for years," or, "I didn't know we had anything like this in Canada."

Please show this copy to your friends.

"You must try to keep the Canadian Poetry Magazine going, for it is one of the best things we have."—Lord Tweedsmuir (John Buchan).

Canadian POETRY MAGAZINE

VOL. 10, No. 1.

SEPTEMBER, 1946

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: EARLE BIRNEY.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:

DR. E. J. PRATT, ANNE MARRIOTT, CHARLES BRUCE, PATRICK WADDINGTON

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: A. H. O'Brien (*Chairman*),
Watson Kirkconnell, Amabel King, Mona Cannon, J. Markowitz.

EDITORIAL

With this number, the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* changes editors and, to some extent, its policy. The system of awarding prizes for the best three poems, and granting honourable mention to three others, is suspended. Instead, all poetry published will be paid for at a uniform rate. This change will bring our Magazine in line with the *Dalhousie Review*, *Queen's Quarterly*, *Saturday Night* and other Canadian Journals paying for verse, and enable us to compete with them on equal terms. Moreover, it will establish our Magazine in the unique but logical position of being the only Canadian journal devoted to poetry and paying for what it prints. It is now the poets of this country who are challenged; we are providing them with a professional medium for their work; it is up to them to make this Magazine not only the best in Canada, but a magazine that will not suffer by comparison with the best in the United States and Great Britain. We believe there is sufficient poetry of good quality being written in this country to produce such a magazine; we appeal to the poets to make our belief an actuality. Unless, however, a considerable number of our writers who have in recent years drifted away from this Magazine, now renew their support, we will not succeed, and the opportunity for a national professional verse magazine of high quality will have been lost, and lost, perhaps, for many years to come.

We do not wish, by such an appeal, to be understood as asking poets to sever their relations with other journals in order

to offer loyalty to us. The amount of space available for periodical publication of verse in this country is pitifully small; there is room for all of us. It is true that the existence of many small poetry magazines tends to prevent any one journal from building up financial stability and a satisfactory circulation, and we are, therefore, at all times ready to discuss with other journals the possibility of amalgamation under our banner. We believe, however, that the *Canadian Poetry Magazine* has a name and a tradition to be maintained and to be developed. It is by far the oldest magazine of poetry in Canada and the only one planned on a national scale and supported by a national body of writers. It is our belief that the seriousness of our purpose, backed now by cold cash, will make *Canadian Poetry Magazine* the natural medium for the expression of the best in poetry in this country, and for the best only.

Just what is the "best" is, of course, the eternal editorial problem. In order that this Magazine may have a wise opinion on such matters, it is at present forming an editorial board of men and women who are themselves writing poetry of distinction. They are being selected also with a view to regional representation, so that we may gain contact with new and old voices in every part of the country. We are happy to number among these the name of a former Editor-in-Chief, Dr. E. J. Pratt, our greatest living poet, and Charles Bruce, an outstanding Canadian Journalist and a poet of ever widening reputation. Other names will be announced in our next issue.

In choosing the "best", your new Editor-in-Chief frankly intends to be eclectic. We are not out to serve any coterie or any narrow theory of poetry. We will insist always on two virtues, neither of which can stand alone: craftsmanship and originality. We do not value rhyming above assonance, the sonnet above free verse, or consider flawless metrics sufficient excuse to publish banalities. "Obscurity" in itself will not form a basis either for rejection or acceptance. There is just as much room for variety of technique in poetry as in painting or music, and

we will not condemn a poem because, like much of Shakespeare, it needs several readings before the full meaning emerges, nor will we print a poem which seems to us to contain nothing but a deliberate and fashionable obscurity which darkens further under scrutiny. We believe that poetry is a means of communication between men, and, of all verbal means, the most memorable. We are not primarily concerned then with whether the poet is "left-wing" or "right-wing", "experimental" or "classical". We are concerned with the success of his attempt to express a genuine and understandable emotion through a form which re-creates a similar emotion in the reader. That is why we shall welcome contributions both from poets who have appeared in the *Northern Review* and *Contemporary Verse*, and from many who have been our own contributors in the past.

We offer our apologies for the lateness of this issue. Changes in staff, the removal of the Editor-in-Chief's office to the west coast, and other factors have made some tardiness inevitable.

Finally, a word about some of the contributors to this issue. We are proud to be the first journal to print the work of Dr. Roy Daniells, professor of English in the University of British Columbia . . . We are proud also to present for the first time, four poems by the late Fl./Sgt. Bertram J. Warr, R.C.A.F., son of B. H. Warr, who has been a contributor to this magazine. Bertram J. Warr, in his few years of adulthood, which ended when he was shot down over Germany in 1942, found time to write poetry of a quality to win him publication and approval in outstanding English magazines. Some of his poems have been republished recently in *Contemporary Verse*, and a memorial prize established in his name. The poems appearing in this issue have never been previously published and have been secured through the courtesy of Sgt. Warr's sister, Miss Mary Warr . . . Dr. Lionel Stevenson, professor of English at the University of Southern California, is a C.A.A. member of long standing, author of several books of poetry, biography and criticism . . . Patrick Waddington, a contributor of short stories and poems to *Northern*

Review and other journals, is assistant news editor for the International Shortwave Service of the C.B.C. . . . Miriam Waddington, his wife, is a Montreal social worker and author of a recent book of verse, *Green World* . . . Dorothy Livesay, author of two books of poetry, including the current *Day and Night*, winner of the Governor-General's Award for Poetry in 1944, is a Vancouver journalist, who is leaving shortly for Europe, where she will act as a foreign correspondent for the Toronto *Daily Star* . . . Charles Bruce is the General Superintendent of the Canadian Press, and author of *Grey Ship Moving*, runner-up for the Governor-General's Poetry Award for 1945. Space does not allow us to introduce all our contributors to this issue; in our next number, we hope to repair this deficiency with a regular contributor's column.

OUR DISTINGUISHED EDITORS

By William Arthur Deacon

The *Canadian Poetry Magazine* was founded on the generous impulse of the late Albert Robson, then president of Toronto Branch, and Pelham Edgar, then National President, "to do something for Canadian poetry", when no such medium existed in Canada. We were immediately fortunate in securing the services of E. J. Pratt, as editor. Without capital and with too little thought for ways and means, the Magazine became a headache until Nathaniel and Emma Benson brought in Jacob Markowitz, as business manager. By the generosity of individual donors, deficits were met; but difficulties were great, and Dr. Pratt asked to be relieved.

Watson Kirkconnell, the pinch hitter, who had just completed his presidency in unpropitious wartime circumstances, gallantly took on the editorship. This Association has never adequately recognized its debt to this loyal servant, who kept Association and Magazine alive during a five-year period that offered every form of discouragement. It should be noted that the humorous and original collection, *The Flying Bull and Other Poems*, has

had no successor. Our editor was ⁴doing chores, and had neither time nor energy for his creative work. It is my pleasure to thank him for an invaluable gift of labour, made at great sacrifice. He has been cheerful, co-operative and selfless amid trying conditions. His resignation has been accepted, since relieving him of these duties was the most fitting means of expressing our boundless appreciation. We hope he will now re-become a poet.

Concurrently with Dr. Pratt's resignation, Dr. Markowitz left Canada to join the Royal Army Medical Corps, and A. H. O'Brien assumed the managership with a determination to balance the budget, which he has been able to do by aggressive sale of advertising. Well known as an author of law books, Mr. O'Brien has also been intimately connected with Canadian poetry for a long time. For his business-like administration, we thank him, and trust that the problems of the immediate future will not daunt his courage or impair his skill.

We hail the new editor with high hopes. Earle Birney has been appointed on the unanimous vote of the National Executive. Born in Calgary in 1904, he was educated at the Universities of British Columbia and Toronto. He was on the latter's staff when he went overseas in 1942 with the Canadian army. Just before leaving, his *David and Other Poems* was published, and received the Governor-General's Award. Shortly after his return, his *Now is Time* (1945) also received a Governor-General's Award. On demobilization, he served for a year with the International Service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, at Montreal, and has now assumed his duties as a professor at the University of British Columbia.

Dr. Birney thus brings to the editorship a high reputation as a poet, a wide knowledge of Canada, and war and broadcasting experience. His speech on Poetry in Canada, at the recent Toronto convention of the Canadian Authors' Association, was the most dramatic utterance in a program staged by literary

celebrities. This pronouncement, anticipated by his article, *Has Poetry a Future in Canada?*, in the *Manitoba Arts Review*, indicates, in my opinion, the soundest attitude that a poetry editor could have, and is the basis for our belief that he will realize the hopes entertained by the founders of the Magazine and by all who have contributed talents to keep it in print. We welcome the third editor with full confidence in him, having chosen him to hold this important redoubt of Canadian literature for a three-year term.

Members of the Association and other readers should know the crucial nature of the task which Dr. Birney and Mr. O'Brien have undertaken. If the subscription list cannot be materially increased, or if it is found that the Magazine is unable to pay its way, there is likely to be yet another fatality in Canadian publishing. Leading poets must contribute, and members and others readers subscribe, if this Association is to continue its efforts to maintain a high class medium for poetry. We can only go on if the services rendered are appreciated. We believe such support will be forthcoming.

POEMS

I

THREE SONNETS

"So they went deeper into the forest," said Jacob Grimm,
And the child sat, listening with all his ears
While the angry Queen passed.

And in after years
The voice and the fall of words came back to him
(Though the fish and the faithful servant were grown dim,
The aproned witch, the door that disappears,
The lovely maid weeping delicious tears,
And the youngest brother with swan's wing for one limb).

"Deeper into the forest" — there are oaks and beeches
And green high hollies. Each multitudinous tree
Stands on the hill and clothes the valley, reaches
Over long lands, down to a roaring sea.

And the child moved onward into the heart of the wood
Unhindered, unresisted, unwithstood.

II

Comrades at hand, by shoulder a steady head,
A guide through purgatory, an elder brother,
A spirit of light, a gliding shape, a mother
Yet robed in white — all these and more they said
Should come — "and one come risen from the dead
Laying hands upon you." They promised it, but either
The charm lacked some ingredient or other
Or I misunderstood what words I read.

So now to walk under the bending trees;
They are enough, no altar sums the grove.
Now memory flows with waters brimming peace

Where in sands once the furious tiger love
Sprang, embraced me. Now is failure pleasure
Treasure unmeasured and eternal leisure.

III

I never swung a staff and all my books
I've buried deep that not a leaf may turn
Under the turning autumn leaves that move
In breezes or in blazes and blue smoke burn.

I never met Miranda; I would scorn
To horn in now she's found and wound her man
And says she's very lucky to be born.
I'm going berry-picking with Caliban.

My nerves are frayed, my hair has come uncurled
But Cal and I have a snack for two all packed.
I bid a glad goodbye to the brave new world;
We won't be back to see the final act.
Farewell the ship and so long to the crew!
Good-bye to playwrights and good-bye to you!

—Roy Daniells.

LOVERS

Lovers tread the water, lovers go
In all the seasons where the waters flow,
They neither swim nor fly
But magically they go
Where all the world envies where they go.

The world loves its lovers
And I love the waters
Where the lovers go,
In spring they conquer color
And imprison all the cries
Of birds and fish within their rainbow eyes.

And deep at night
You hear them wander
In the city's woods,
The alleys and the streets;
You hear them cry beneath the eaves
They sigh and startle husband and his wife
From sleep, "The lovers," says the wife,
And husband answers, "So were we."

The world listens and at night it hears
The silvering voice of love that pierces sleep,
All lovers weep, they neither swim nor fly
But magically they float in trees
And tread the water of the wavering will;
With all the cries of birds
Imprisoned in their rainbow eyes
They go where all the world envies
Where they go.

THE MUSIC TEACHERS

I

Was she real? Cast like a golden gargoye
In the role of music teacher her pale hair
Lit the dark winter afternoons
And her high heels sang
In sharp soprano along empty halls.
She was called Anna and her eyes
At nine were gentian but by four o'clock
The gentians closed and their lovely blue
Smudged and purled with gray.

At night she went along unlit avenues
Dreaming of some lost dinner hour
To a theme of Schubert's or a serenade
By Verdi; light spilled in the street

The children whirled and in her tired mind
Scheherazade did a turn on skates,
The fabulous prince skiid down the mountainside
Dressed in white satin, his golden braid
Burned her eyes until the whirling snow
Filled the blank spaces.

She entered her apartment and its inky dark
Curled around her, feathery plumes
Licked her pale face and nested in her hair
Like secrets, secrets everywhere,
In all the corners, and in Anna's eyes
There swam a lost Atlantis.

II

At ten o'clock, Vera, the raw-boned pianist
At the Rialto stretches; in the dressing room
Her laughter is honest as Abe Lincoln's gesture.
Her brownswept eyes hide nothing, you can tell
She's from Missouri, a girl filled with corn
And crazy music, you can hear the pigs
Capering down the mountainside in all her playing
Vera is angled black and green and loves
To pick out noises from the piano box.
She sees beneath the lid right to its coffined heart
And she can make her audience live or die.

III

Anna (is she real?) and Vera, two music teachers
Both prisoners of winter,
Anna's gentian eyes are dying
And Vera freezes, Missouri kept her summery
For years, but this north country is hard,
Nothing melts it and the scrubbled pines
Crowd her memories and bleach her joy.

Anna and Vera, names of two music teachers
With soft foreign endings
Liquid as Noel, Ann-a, Ver-a,
And the soft, soft fall
Of sound on snow.

NOON HOUR DOWNTOWN

The endless wish is a mirror for worshippers
But a riddle for lovers who have solved
The violence of living in an ended wish.
The gardenia worn in January is an attack
On time, the insignia of your search
For a new wish that will affirm the world
Against all maybes.

Meanwhile wishless mirrors crash
And lovers' breath clouds over glass of time,
Quixotic flowers briefly tilt at season,
No pattern fits the complex shape of pain
Mysterious stranger, no vessel holds it,
Unless you unprison loneliness, suspend all self
And journey down the crowded moving streets
Endless with wishes of the passers-by.

—*Miriam Waddington.*

ABRACADABRA

In the wicked afternoon
When the witch is there
When night's downsnare
Swoops like a loon
Strafing the air
In the wicked afternoon

In the witty time of day
When mind's at play
Cat's at call

The guitar off the wall —
Wind holds sway
In the witty time of day

Then the witch will walk
Full of witty talk
And the cat will stalk
Tail high as a cock

The guitar in the room
Will fuss and fume
Strumming at the tune
For a wicked afternoon

And out in the park
Wind will unfrock
The autumn trees
And falling leaves
Shiver with shock —

And Time with his
Weaving, wailing horn
Shivers my timbers
Shatters my corn:
Little boy blue
Blows a blue tune
On a wicked afternoon.

—*Dorothy Livesay.*

THE STEELYARDS

In the end it comes to this: you weigh the alternatives
On the personal steelyards of the mind; and the deal is private.

The scales of reason (available in standard models)
Are true enough for the making of public bargains —
When to mow the buckwheat and set the nets,

How to behave in the crush of the midtown traffic —
But in matters touching the core of personal interest
The weight is reached on a far more sensitive instrument.

What could logic tell you with France falling
Or the tax-sale posters nailed to the barn next door?

They give you reason (mass-produced in units)
And a march played to the tune of love and hate;
But in the end the single mind takes over;
The blood and breath and nerves, the recorded experience
Traced in the metal of flesh. And in the end
The act is yours. The outbreak comes at last
Against the order of the brain's long habit,
Against the imposed plan, the induced emotion;
And the trimmed weight is in the measured act:
"This I will do" and "this I will not do."

In the end you come to the mind: an impulse added,
A caution tried, a careful thought removed,
The counterweight of preference inched up
In the blunt notches of the tilting will —
The action ordered and the purpose fixed
On a straight beam slowing to a level "yes."

In the end it comes to this: the weighed alternative —
An the weight tallied to the single you.

—*Charles Bruce.*

TRAVELLERS

Turning with shaded eyes we see
far off the land of Bimini.
Ponce de Leon wandered long,
grew old; perhaps the charts were wrong.

No more remote than yesterday
that happy land-fall seemed away;
Atlantis that the ancients sought
was but as far as Plato's thought.

Hopes insubstantial as a cloud
our generation's birth endowed
were scattered by the opening gun
that drew a circle round the sun.

And those who looked for Lyonesse
whose wonders they could only guess
for all it sank beneath the sea
perhaps were no less wise than we.

ONCE —

Geese silhouette across the moon
arrow and are gone again.
These are the months of separation and longing
months of departure, not to return,
and I couple that sorrow in your face
with the branches' gesture on the window
or to a room, empty of furniture
where once we lived and intermingled breath.

AND AGAIN —

Lifting the line of granite cloud I saw
light with supreme effort striking through
shudder an agonizing moment and withdraw.
This is an image I might offer you
our fear-encompassed minds dispensing with
the whippet forms that race along the blue —
bright autumn days when fires are set
and leaves take all the colour and the breath
from frosted air unwatered by the wind.

QUICK CHANGE ARTISTS

They hide their doubtful meanings in a cloud
of hints, diffusions, ambiguities
through which the light of content feebly strikes
cold as the flaccid sun of winter is.
Filtering through solemn lines banalities
all in the one flat key, close-cropped and pared,
unlyric as a government report,
they cut a phrase that syntax quivers at
and change the sense twice over, then stop short
to leave the reader groping for support.
Fashions they follow as a style in dress
now cryptic, classic, Eliot-cum-Pope
cut to the verbal bone, or suddenly
flower in a burst of tropic imagery
shot through with colors of the spectroscope.
Or Donne's their fancy; they would be
skilled metaphysicians with less with than hope
and death's their topic, in they rope
mole-thoughts of Webster, Massinger and Ford.
Then mark them most by words, they range
through all that Roget can afford
to grace a line with something rich and strange
and not a clause but suffers a sea-change
refracted out of shape to please the eye
of those who write and know not why.

—*Patrick D. Waddington.*

THE ORGAN-GRINDER AND THE LADY

"You at the window,
Soft and immune,
Smiling at the crescendo
Of my blatant tune,
With gleams of firelight
On your shadowy hair

You glimmer like starlight
When spring nights are fair."

"Strange man in the street,
Black-browed and lanky.
With snow on your feet
And the shivering monkey,
I made music, too,
On my docile spinet
Till your clamour swarmed through
And overran it."

"Silken and slender
And white as a bone,
Would you scream, I wonder,
If I threw a stone
And smashed the barrier
Of ice-cold glass?
Or laugh at me merrier
Than a tinker's lass?"

"On my hearth the flame
Sinks to gray ashes.
Round my window frame
Hover wing-free wishes.
I've nothing to lose
By a madcap bargain
To have snow on my shoes
And dance to your organ."

WORDS TO THE ARROGANT

Ride the green-and-white pintos of the tide.
Tear the diaphanous canopies from the sanctuary of the upper-
most air.

Glide on the undulations of the wind with more than the eagle's
pride.

Where shall you outdistance your shuddering despair?

Turn from the compassionless ocean and the sky that is im-
placably stern.

Creep into a burrow where the small furry neighbors sleep.

Learn the silent whisper of the groping root and the unfolding
fern.

Deep in your dark refuge you will not forget how to weep.

Power has been conferred upon you and Midas-gold in a
shower.

Low in the earth or high in the heavens every secret is yours to
know.

Cower as you will, you remain a potentate in a gloomy tower,
Slow to admit yourself a captive where you domineered not long
ago.

All the verdant melody of spring and the scarlet revelry of fall
Wait with their serenades to lure you from your solitary dais of
state.

Call to them. Say you are coming. Wave a handkerchief from
the wall.

Late though the hour, there is yet time to scamper out through
one open gate.

—*Lionel Stevenson.*

DROWNED

How do the drowned know day from night?

With what strange luminosity

Of curious, refracted light

Does morning penetrate the sea?

A world of pastels and the slow,

Deliberate motion to and fro;

Slow descent and lazy climb,
In solemn disregard for time . . .

In what ambiguous way does spring
Intrude their cool, opaque domain,
And down through fifty fathoms bring
The look of orchards after rain?
Or is the nature of that place
Self-contained in time and space,
With neither season, month, nor year
Vital to its atmosphere?

—*R. H. Grenville.*

SASKATCHEWAN LAD

He has the coyote for shadow, the badger a wicked gray
brother,

And he hunts the gopher that squeals in the meadow.

When wind rubs the oatfield than satin smoother

He whistles, he shouts — the merriest song to be heard,
Saskatchewan lad.

He's coached by the meadowlark, scattering song like spring
crocuses

On hill and in hollow, heady and sweet

As the flowerets yellow of silver wolf willow.

The sky is a low roof, the prairie his pillow,

Clean sun is his lamp.

Not too wise for joy, not too dull for sorrow,

Tasting good, tasting bad,

Athirst for the free gift of living —

Saskatchewan lad.

When the wheat's in the head,

And the slow breezes brush the wide field like a shadow-flecked
sea,

When the pitiless sun sends heat waves to spin and dance

On the edge of the land,
The farmer's son tries the yield of the promising "quarter"
(Stalks, brittle-gold, sharpen his hand; dark kernels
Are mellow and sweet to the tongue.)
He whistles a familiar tune — the hopefulest song to be heard,
Saskatchewan lad.
The sky a known roof, the prairie his bed,
And the sun is his guide.
Not too rash for joy, not resigned to sorrow,
Having taken the good with the bad,
He savors the free gift of living —
Saskatchewan lad.

Wild geese with an echoing cry, flying south, write
Finish in thin moving lines on the sky.
Here the cropped land shows the path of the combine;
There a spume of glittering straw builds stacks for the burning,
Chill evenings. Crawling wagons and trucks
Bring No. 1 Northern to high elevators,
Those watchful towers, policing the acres that cram them.
At ball game and fair, the farmer jingles new coin in his pockets,
Cheers the home team, courts the pretty girl,
Learns to hum a new tune — (the oldest tune to be heard,)
Saskatchewan lad.
The cool sky his room, the prairie his table spread,
And the chill autumn stars a book to be read.
Not greedy for joy, nor fearful of sorrow,
Knowing the good and the bad,
He drinks of the free gift of living,
Saskatchewan lad.

And when winter locks with his key all but frost-bitten hours,
Day brightens the prairie to brilliance, withholding its heat.
Snow is today and tomorrow — it conceives and buries the days.
Then he shouts to his neighbor, shielding keen eyes from the sun

On a million frost particles, high over indigo drifts.
His the heartiest voice to be heard,
Saskatchewan lad.

The swift night his sleep, the prairie his rest,
The sun a companion of future and past.
Not unmarked with joy, the braver for sorrow,
Having tasted the good and the bad,
He enriches the free gift of living,
Saskatchewan lad.

—*Amelia Wensley.*

THE HEART TO CARRY ON

Every morning from this home
I go to the aerodrome.
And at evening I return
Save when work is to be done.
Then we share the separate night
Half a continent apart.

Many endure worse than we,
Division means by years and seas.
Home and lover are contained,
Even cursed within their breast.

Leaving you now, with this kiss
May your sleep tonight be blest,
Shielded from the heart's alarms
Until morning I return.
Pray tomorrow I may be
Close, my love, within these arms,
And not lie dead in Germany.

THE EAGLE SORROW

You wish in solitude to bear the present sorrow,
The mountain bursting in your eye;

Darkness and the bolted door for mourning,
Tears have no dignity upon the public way.

Why conceal, parent, friend or lover,
The war's wounds, these children of the war?
Reveal, parade your crosses in the market place,
The yielding flesh will seam submission's lines upon a holy face.

Unaggressive in peace, beloved comrade and friend,
We have required of you your dearest on our battlefield;
Someone has burst into flames; now for the spirit's ends,
For the greatest war, volunteer that which you shield,
Your personal grief.

O, do believe that grief can hold an army's power,
And like a trumpet note
Your eagle sorrow soon will spring and soar.

THE INTELLECTUAL ATTITUDE

Yes, of course, now, it is evident even to me,
Only a fatly-crammed pouch of tobacco
Flung on my table. Though a moment ago
There was . . . I did certainly see
No pouch, but a fat brown horse, lying curved and live,
A brown horse there, lying down.
And it was real, real in even that wink of time.
"All that is real . . ." said he.
Silly. I smiled at myself, but at once began to frown;
Had I spoken a word of this nonsense.
Had anyone heard.
Had so heathen a young impression
Flown into anyone's maw of a mind,
And been spat out, illogical, shattered and coated with slime
By the reasoning teeth that grind,
And reject or pass to digestion?

Well, luckily no, I think not, because nobody pounced on me,
Rushed in loudly and suddenly,
(As only the loud are able),
To learn, to understand why I had said
That a brown horse lay on my table.
Nobody this time anxiously felt my head.

Really a man should take more care,
Such instants, even though quite rare,
May mar opinions, won't assist to get him anywhere,
And surely show
Inconsequential tendencies.
Again, there was, once, very long ago,
A woman. And I . . . she . . . I mean I loved.
And I was rushed at then, and it was proved,
By all the clearer folk who thought, my friends,
I was a fool, clearly and truly proved, but then,
I loved and listened not. You know how one ascends,
Is blind, is blissful, is . . . well all the rest:
And when it stops,
You know a little, do you, how one flops.
O, then reality comes bounding in,
To pick one up, and dust,
And pretty soon adjust,
And make one smile a smile at one's 'past folly'
That fights its way past pain, and is a little this.
But then, one learns, it's said. One always calls the future in,
Plants here a fertile, profitable homily,
And thereabout sets carefully,
Some awesome scarecrows labelled memory.

RHYTHMS

There's a jazz band sighing low across the court
The song's about a coon in a cotton picker's camp
He wails about a river that he'll never see again

And a hot-lipped drug-fiend who'd been and done him wrong.
They have him on the floor and he can't get on his feet
Like his tune that struggles upward but the rhythm beats it back,
And it wanders back and forth like a convict in a cell
All the walls and the rhythms and the women beat us back.

There's an old man sitting near me, rocking in a chair
Back and forth, back and forth, never getting anywhere,
For there is nowhere worth getting son, I tried it once and know,
And you'll save yourself the sorrow if you get yourself a rocker
Keep your eyes upon the floor and your soul inside the rhythm
of the rocker rocking backward only just so far, it knows
that the rhythms there to hold it and it cannot topple over.
All the rockers and the old men and their rhythms beat us back.

There's a trumpet in that jazz band and it's straining through
the mute
And the gristly-lipped tooter has a lot of wind to spare
For a last long note that cracks the dirge, and soars above it
freed.
Leave the rockers for the old men of the churches and the state.

For we've got a counterpoint,
And it's rushing us along
to the sun
shaking off the rusty rhythms
beating fast in our blood,
A new song, a young song
a song for marching hearts
marching forward to the sun.

—*Bertram J. Warr.*

NIGHT PATROL

Italy, 1944.

Quiet and the moon's clean light
Lay over the valley;
Quiet and the hand of death

Lay on us
As by the running streams we moved
Whose silver ripples spoke more loud
Than our approaching feet . . .
Couched easy on his pack he lay,
Breast, shoulders and head
From the waters raised.
Marble white and marble firm,
A face of youth, and as cold to the sight
As the stream's caress to our halted feet.

Days ago he went before us
To this place
Made rendezvous before us with another.
Sunshine saw him fall
And lying as his day grew dim
He looked into the stars,
And slipped among them . . .
Now lost to us standing there
In the nearer light, blinded
To them and him.
Our voiceless feet moved on;
Behind us moonlight, the hastening stream,
One mirrored star.

—*V. C. Moore.*

THEY THAT MOURN

You come to me mourning, waiting my word
Seeking no pity, only an answer
And what shall I say?
With unfathomable eyes asking for death
You moved from silence, waiting my word
"There is no place for me,
Where can I find a place?"

Life is a madness, filled with little things
What hope is there in words? Yet, I must speak,
I speak, then, and the words, like brittle glass,
Break against the dignity of grief.

I say to the silence "Your tears are not your own,
They are a part of all the bitter years . . .
And who is better for it?"
And I say to you "Mother, have faith . . ."
Knowing what fragile hope there is in words,
Knowing I offer nothing.

—*A. E. Robertson.*

HOTEL LUNCHEON

Complain of your lot, upholstered and girdled simperers,
and complain, you with the flannel-covered paunches, at the
birth-pangs of hunger.
Complain, all you ill-used dieters — have you no right;
Are you not hungry for the food that you deny yourselves?

Slump under some shattered wall, citizen of Poland,
and you Greek, you Serb, you Dutchman,
you lustrous-eyed Italian,
and you Jew, sore-infected shelterless demi-dead,
slump lower, lest your image be projected into this room.

—*Selma G. Bartlett.*

DUST

A heap of grey insentient dust
Within my hand—there held in trust
Till it shall merge and be my own,
Its substance mingled, breath and bone,
Impalpable, unbreathing quite
As uninspired as dynamite,
The melted texture of my flesh

Assuming contours clean and fresh
Of our old earth that drinks the rain
And savors life—if life remain;
Grey dust, I grant you furlough while
I briefly live, and briefly smile,
Then at some rendezvous, you'll meet
Some added dust upon a street.

—*Alfred W. Purdy.*

APPEASERS

They said, "Here is solace, ease for stress, soft peace."
Distant I saw warm colour, lulling perfume
Seeped thick from the heavy flowers of the tropic wood;
Heart hollow for comfort came near —
And shrank as if snake-touched, seeing beyond
The inevitable lapse into decay.

No solace there in the lush, stifling-sweet,
Dense rot in its perfume.
I will leave this clutching wood, press out
Into bare steep country, sharp air,
Peace is in sturdy leaves making no stain,
Ease in strong scent of stripped, storm-raked earth,
Life and breath in the smart of the wind.

Comfort is the high sunlight on the peak.

—*Anne Marriott.*

WITH RAIN

With rain there will be time to think once more
Beyond the laughter of the summer sun;
For solitude and musing long begun
And for the weighing of the dreamer's ore.
There will be time for books, for quiet hours
Of talk within a rain-protected room

And contemplation's rare and lovely bloom
To dwarf the splendour of all earthly flowers.

With rain the clamour of the world will cease
And we shall be alone in one small space
To gaze on our own image, face to face,
And touch again the soothing hand of peace.
With rain we shall have time to turn and go
To where we shall be known and shall know.

—*Gilean Douglas.*

**FOR C.G.S.; CAPT., R.C.A.M.C.,
Killed in Normandy, September, 1944**

The sun has set too soon.
I spent the morning of my life doubting
The universe of matter, debating
The university of mind, and trying on
The curious costumes of experience.

I breakfasted on brains
At half-past ten, continued analysing
Reflections in a human mirror, tracing
Reflexes in a styptic heart, and found them once;
There were three women and a dog I loved.

I was not well-behaved.
The morning of my life I spent preparing
The impudence for knowledge, gearing
The imp-who-doubted for the doctor-who-believed;
I had no time to comb my hair for lunch.

At high noon I came of age,
Under the brilliance of the sun, seeing
The suffering of Homo (Sapiens!), doing
The insufferable with him, for the right
Of questioning the life he suffers for.

And now for me the sun has set too soon.
I leave you, as you stumble through the night,
The cold, reflected wisdom of the moon!

REMEMBRANCE DAY, 1946

What should I remember?

Should I recall the mother and the misplaced persons,
Recall the child with taut balloon belly
Hungry for food but sated with the fact of death?
Remember the breastless girl and the bayonet,
And the scientific experiments?

Should I think of the atom, my friend,
Too small to see, too large to understand!
Should I recall the interesting effects of radioactivity
On human flesh, or what it does to cities?
Should I remember names and places and events?

Or should I think of the quiet glory,
The muted trumpet of heroism and the horn of pride,
The comradeship, co-operation, even love!
Should I think back on high resolve
And the loss or attainment of it?

What should I remember? Should it be the friend
I had, who shrivelled in a flamethrower,
Or the patient gunner trampled by a tank?
Should I recall their faces in the Verie Light
Or the sound that left their bodies with their souls?

What would you have me dwell upon today?

—*Mavor Moore.*

VARIAION OF AN OLD THEME

The chastenings of Fate are manifold,
Devious, sly, comically inevitable.
The timid soul peers out its privy mousehole,
Sniffs at the wine-sweet air of self-esteem,
Advances, oh, how cautiously! one slim paw,
The other then, and then the quivering whiskers,
Damp nose, beady eyes sharp with excitement
Darting around and back with all acuteness.
Seeing (at last!) no danger, out it comes
In all its nakedness. "This time," it thinks,
"This hundred hundredth time, all has gone well."
And now begins its little dance of triumph
(What nimble, silky feet! How smooth the tail!)
Drunk and exulting in its self-esteem;
While all the time, snug in the hidden corner,
The house-cat, Ate, watches, broadly smirking
(A well-kept beast, sleek, bearing no malice,
Cheerfully dutiful: mice must be kept in place;
No harm, withal, to have a little sport.)
But finally the frolic turns to tedium;
A bored, efficient paw clears off the stage
And stalks away, intent on other matters.
Now must the bruised soul, cowering again in darkness
Prepare to lick the wounds, bind tight the limbs
That danced so gay a little while ago,
Well if it learns to live on Ate's terms,
Enjoy her grim and dexterous artistry
And find a wry delight in mere survival.

—Donald L. Greene.

ECHO OF A FAIRY TALE

Rapunzel — Rapunzel — let down your hair —
From the high window in the doorless tower
Let down your long, long golden hair,

Fragrant and shining as a sea of gorse
Dew-wet, sun-warmed, upon a lonely hill.

I see it gleaming by the window pane
Like sunflowers turning to the noontday sun,
Like Persian roses plucked by little hands
To honour valiant kings come back from war.

A ripened cornfield swaying in the wind,
A willow, on a chill October day,
Weeping for summer by a limpid pool,
It shines like these: Oh, let me climb
By your long hair into the safe warm dark,
Into the silence of your tower room.

Rapunzel — Rapunzel — let down your hair —
She does not heed — her window closed
And dark is frowning at the sombre sky,
The forest shivers in the windless night
And Terror creeps and rustles in the leaves:
I am alone — Rapunzel does not hear,
Or maybe she is dead —
There is no golden ladder from the earth —
I am alone — alone I fight and die —
Rapunzel — Rapunzel —

—*Mabel L. Payne.*

BOOK REVIEWS

By The Editor

Profile: A Chapbook of Canadian Verse. Published by the Poetry Craft Group of the Ottawa Branch, Canadian Authors' Association, 1946. 47 pp. 75 cents.

These fifty poems were selected from 1,138 entries in a Canadian-wide competition sponsored by the above-named group. Sixteen of them won prizes totalling \$160.00; the remainder were paid for at a uniform rate. The Ottawa donors are to be complimented for their public spirit in a much-neglected cause—the financial encouragement of Canadian literature. The editors and printers are to be praised for a neat and inexpensive chapbook (there is even a white circle on the cover just the size of a tumbler—for saki?). As for the judges, it is always risky to congratulate them because one never knows what they have rejected. In fairness to Mr. Wilfred Eggleston and Miss Anne Marriott, however, it should be said that they have brought to light, if no genuises, at least a number of competent writers of verse, and awarded their prizes justly among those whom they have printed.

Outstanding is the work of Tom Farley, Ottawa, whose first-prize poem, "Trinity", is original in atmosphere and economic in utterance, with that quality of strangeness and surprise which is at the root of much of what we mean by "poetry". In technique, the most contemporary among the prize-winners is Strowan Robertson, Vancouver, who expresses himself subtly, though not always clearly. Miss Elizabeth Campbell, of Toronto, while not always free from sentimental diction, impresses with the honesty and the grace of her feeling. Miss R. H. Grenville, Victoria, is the most polished of those represented but, by comparison, has too little to say. The other prize-winners are: M. Eugenie Perry, Victoria; George Whalley, Lennoxville, P.Q.; Francis Foley, Montreal; Selma G. Bartlett, Ottawa; Pauline Havard, Victoria; Norma E. Smith, Halifax; Nathan R. Jacoby, Toronto; Kathryn Munro, Toronto. Statistical critics may be

interested to know that out of the thirty-three writers represented in this volume, Ontario is first with sixteen, and British Columbia second with six (four of them prize-winners).

Poems 1939-1944. By GEORGE WHALLEY, *Toronto*: Ryerson Press, 1946. 16 pp. 50 cents.

The latest Ryerson Poetry Chapbook presents a score of poems by a former naval officer who served with both the British and Canadian navies, and is now a lecturer in English at Bishop's College. The effect of Mr. Whalley's work is one of bareness but not barrenness. He makes no use of the ornaments of rhyme or assonance, and his rhythms are neither very marked nor as varied as the changing line-lengths pretend. Nevertheless, these poems are well above the dead-level of Canadiana. They have a sincerity in their simplicity, the honesty of a man who has endured much of the worst of war, felt deeply and observed with quiet care. There is no brilliance of image nor profound stir of music in this chapbook, but some verses in it have the charm of a tone-poem, calm, controlled and supple. And in occasional pieces such as "The Sound of Bare Feet", there is also a subtlety of association and of thought. The locale of the poems ranges over the Atlantic, the North Sea, Malta, the Egyptian desert, the Cotswolds and the English Channel. Most striking, as a war record, is a poetic diary, "Normandy Landing".

Drumbeats Through Your Dreams. By HELEN MIDDLETON. Privately printed, 1946? 40 pp.

In a foreword, Mr. Cusack, the "Poetry Editor" of the *Montreal Standard*, acclaims this book as fulfilling "the requirements of true poetry, which has been defined as the retelling of great events remembered in passivity . . ." Although this reviewer prefers his Wordsworth straight ("poetry . . . takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity"), it must be admitted that Mr. Cusack's variant is more appropriate to the work in hand. Whatever genuine emotion the author experienced, she has not conveyed it in these sentimental and ornate ditties.

These Things Linger. By HELEN BALL, *Toronto*: Mrs. O. V. Ball, 27 Webb Ave. 22 pp. 75 cents.

These are poems of delight in nature, of love, and bereavement. They are not pieces in which one should look for brilliance of imagination or complexity of thought, and the quality is uneven from poem to poem; but many have a pleasantness of fancy and a quiet thoughtfulness which rescues them from the ordinary. Several of these poems have appeared in the *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. One of the most successful, from the standpoint of form, is "Flashback".

Sea Pieces. By CLARE MURRAY FOOSHEE, *New York*: Harbinger House, 1945. 42 pp. \$1.50.

This is a first book of verse whose themes range farther than the title implies, and include poems prompted by travel in Europe, by art and ancient history and by the problems of contemporary humanity. Miss Fooshee's form is varied and she is equally graceful in an Italianate sonnet or a short-lined epigram. A new American poet of some promise.

Quatrains. By ALBERT RALPH KORN, *New York*: The Comet Press, 1946. pp. 63. \$1.00.

"Cameo-like in its incisiveness, the quatrain, for all its brevity, is a complete poem in itself, capable of sustaining a high order of thought." One can agree so far with the dust-jacket, but not with its claim that Mr. Korn here offers a "rich treasure" in the form. Not one of his fifty-odd verses rises above the utterly banal in either thought or expression. Here is the final entry, quoted in its entirety:

In every clime our freemen stand
Old Glory waves on sea and land.
With fortitude they meet the foe
And conquer with a hero's blow.

The Labyrinth: A Philosophical Poem. By NATHANIEL MICKLEM, *Toronto*: Oxford University Press, 1945. 43 pp. \$1.25.

This is a long philosophical screed in Spenserians celebrating

the Christian virtues, in particular Chastity, Justice and Mercy. The publisher says it is "something more that a theologian's bookish monologue", but what that something is, this reviewer was not able to discover. The adoption of Spenserian stanzas is no excuse for a diction studded with "doth" and "sith", and with pompous neologisms such as "aggrace". There is no poetic thread in this labyrinth.

Through the Dark Wood. By POLLY HILL, *Toronto*: Oxford University Press, 1945. 40 pp. \$1.25.

This first book by an English poet is unusual in structure. An allegorical fantasy about the growth of the child mind, it is shaped as dialogues between the young girl and various relatives or companions, including the shade of her great-grandfather. In view of its lack of imagery, compression, or rhythm, this work might better have been printed as prose; the free verse creates an impression of pretentiousness and looseness; in prose it might be accepted as a fairy tale in the Lewis Carroll tradition. Appropriate form alone, however, would not have saved this work from a certain thinness of thought and vagueness of direction. There is no doubt, however, that Miss Hill has originality.



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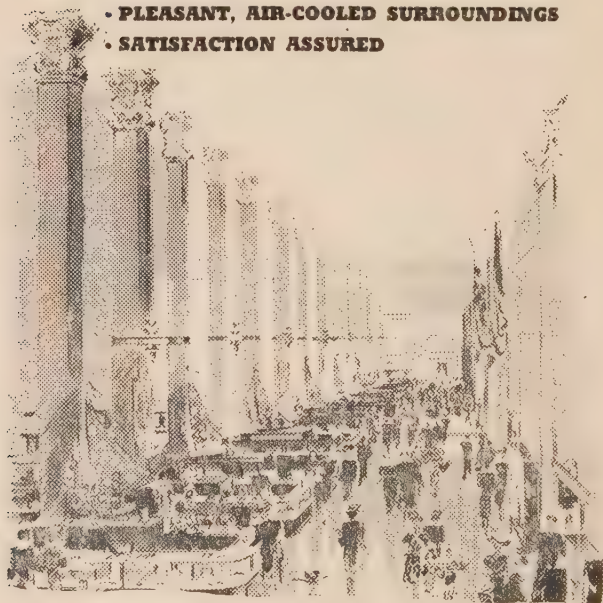
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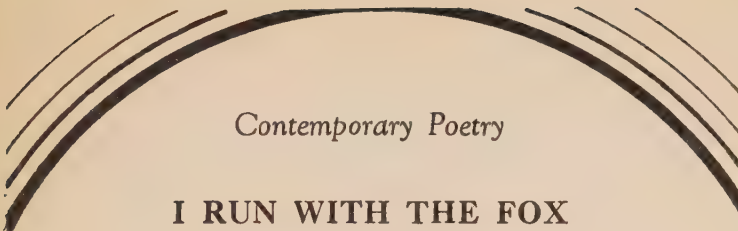
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